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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a career resource center (CRC) and its importance to technical career programs. The role of the professional staff in helping students make crucial decisions is described. A review of the literature is presented which lists resources and information that may be helpful in setting up a career resource center. Data are reported from studies of college career programs along with recommendations for developing career guidance centers. A description of the CRC at Harcum Junior College (Pennsylvania) is described, including the guidance activities, full-time, part-time and summer job placements, employer-college relations, the career library, the credentialing process, and job recruiter visits. (JAC)

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FOR TECHNICAL CAREER JOBS, A CAREER RESOURCE CENTER

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For Technical Career Jobs, A Career Resource Center

Colleges offering technical career programs of study should be in the forefront, providing their students with a competently staffed Career Resource Center. This essential student personnel activity is a vital academic-collateral service. Broadly defined, academic-collateral services embrace the spectrum of activities supplementary to teaching that are undertaken by colleges to help students, both collectively and individually, to make optimal use of their educational opportunities. Such services are characterized as "academic-collateral" since they both support and reinforce the academic programs of study.

In a well-planned and staffed Center the various activities and services offered seek to change students, both in their behavior and their values. The four principal dimensions which should receive attention include:

Character: Seek to influence students to move toward a firm commitment to high ideals of behavior in their job performance.

Intellect: Encourage students to adopt more rational bases for their conduct, understanding, skills, knowledge, aspirations, and attitudes.

Personality: Help students develop more realistic self-assessments and greater ability to cooperate with and tolerate others.

Citizenship: Seek to raise their level of awareness and informal participation in the activities of government at various levels.

For most college students their undergraduate studies represent their last major opportunity to prepare themselves for articulation into the world of work. During this period it is essential for all such students to assess their own knowledge and academic abilities levels, for this will help insure the most productive use of their capabilities. In addition, they should also have a realistic understanding of their personality characteristics, for these can materially affect the degree of satisfaction they find in their future work. Taken together, all of this information relating to the personal qualifications of the individual can be used in making career decisions which are appropriate (i.e. best) for the

individual.

The professional staff in the Career Resource Center (CRC) can assist students in making these critical assessments, as well as help them explore suitable possibilities in further education and/or immediate employment upon graduation.

Selected CRC base-line data can be generated to provide benchmark measures. Such indicative records help to reduce subjective assessments which may, in whole or in part, be non-representative impressions. Such impressions are therefore subject to serious inaccuracies. Whenever possible, they should be avoided.

A valuable reference document has been written by Mamarchev and Pritchett (1978). Based upon a computer search of the data base of the National Institute of Education Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), this document presents a comprehensive source of information relating to the planning, staffing, and operating of CRCs. Guidliner are included for setting up CRCs at all educational levels and in various community settings.

Another useful general reference, edited by Keene (1977) provides an annotated list of the career educational materials which may be borrowed for previewing from the Career Education Resource Center in Colorado. The types of materials include audiovisual aids, lesson plans, student materials, bibliographies, dictionaries, learning activity packets, teacher guides, and textbooks.

Lee (1975) reports the results of a survey among 45 deans of guidance at California community colleges with enrollments of 10,000 or more and seven career guidance experts. Respondents evaluated 89 statements concerning the objectives, services, staff roles, and organizational policies and practices which should be included in a model guidance program. Among factors reported with high desirability ratings were: enhancing students' decision-making skills, helping students make realistic career choices, counseling students individually, having qualified personnel interpret test scores, helping students to find part-time work during school years, maintaining liaison with local high schools, and regularly evaluat-

ing the efeectiveness of career guidance programs.

Jones (1977) presents recommendations for developing career guidance centers in community colleges which would enable their clients to explore, prepare for, select, and progress in an occupation in line with their individual needs, interests, and abilities, and in a job with occupational opportunities. The following areas are outlined: (1) career guidance program objectives; (2) preliminary steps in establishing a center on campus; (3) planning the physical facilities; (4) the improvment of staff, students, and community attitudes toward the program through the dissemination of written objectives to the staff, involvment of the center in other college and community activities, and use of newsletters to update career information; (5) the minimum services required for an effective program; (6) supportive services including placement, work experiences, financial aid, and outreach programs; (7) cooperative planning with secondary schools; (8) cooperative planning with the employment development department; (9) center requirements with respect to staffing, equipment, furnishings, supplies, materials for an occupational library, and test materials; and (10) addressed and descriptions of other career planning resource centers in the area.

Heller (1978) describes a session-by-session plan for a series of after-school Career Path Workshops for 11th grade women students. Designed as a cooperative effort of community colleges and high schools, the objective of the workshops is to increase the number of women entering nontraditional technical and professional careers by providing: (1) occupational/educational instruction and opportunity to plan for a career, and (2) supplementary instruction in math and science skills necessary for many nontraditional careers.

Following are definitions of the detailed indicative records maintained by the CRC at Harcum Junior College, a small-enrollment (approximately 800) two-year private, independent college for women located in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.

I CAREER GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES

1. <u>Career Counseling Interviews:</u> These are one-to-one sessions in which the

student considers future plans including personal vocational assessment, life style career options, and employment possibilities. Job search technique training and vocational testing are also involved here. Acquiring job openings, resume writing, interviewing, and follow-up are examples of the skills covered.

2. Seminar Attendance: Voluntary seminar attendance is provided for group exploration of vocational outlooks, plans, and options. All efforts are made for coordination and involvment of faculty in these sessions.

3. College Transfer Interviews: For those students considering transfer to further their education, information is available in the Career Resource Center. Counseling sessions for identification of interests and plans and exploration of possible institutions constitute such an interview.

II FULL-TIME PLACEMENT

4. Registered: Any graduate desiring assistance in full-time job placement must registere in the CRC office to be considered an "active" listing recipient. These registered files are periodically revised via mailings to clear out any students who have become inactive. Year to date tallies reflect one year's graduates who have registered from the time of graduation to the next graduation: interested alumnae are also included.

5. Job Vacancies Listed: All positions listed result from telephone calls, direct contacts, newspapers, or faculty referrals for known vacancies.

6. Referred: Any student who is furnished position listings is considered a referral.

7. Placed: Any student who secures a position as a result of direct referral or job search technique training is considered a placement resulting from Career Resource Center activities.

III PART-TIME & SUMMER PLACEMENT

8. Registered: Any student may register for part-time and summer job referrals. The registrant's abilities, hours, and interests are indicated.

9. Job Vacancies Listed: The part-time and summer job listings contain all positions available. These reflect both short term or single positions, such as babysitting, along with more extensive experience-related jobs in the student's field of interest.

10. Referred: When a part-time or summer position is received, those students registered and available for the type of work are notified. Each student that receives a referral in a day is counted.

IV EMPLOYER-COLLEGE RELATIONS

11. Employer Contacts: All contacts with potential employers (by mail, telephone, etc.) are counted as individual contacts. These include direct solicitation of vacancies for listing with the center, follow-up mailings, calls to employers who have listed positions, and any other contacts which alert employers and the community of this no-charge service.

12. Guest Speakers: Professionals and occupational representatives are brought on campus to speak with interested students.

13. Guest Speaker Attendance: Those students who participate in any speaker program are included here. A sign-up procedure before the speaker's arrival and an attendance list at the presentation indicates the success and involvment of students in this program.

14. College Representatives: Admissions representatives from other colleges who visit the Harcum campus to 'recruit' pospective 4-year college transfer students are counted here.

V CAREER LIBRARY

15. Student Reference Use: Recorded here is the number of students who seek out or are directed to use the many sources of career information in the Center, including books, files, periodicals and kits.

16. Books Circulated: Most of the center's publications resources are available for students to check out over night.

17. Holdings Acquired: New information is incorporated daily into the re-

source files and stacks. Career books, directories, periodicals, kits, and many pamphlets keep the information current.

VI CREDENTIALS SERVICE

18. Credentials Registrants: Graduates may establish a personal credentials file composed of a current resume, recommendations, and other information they wish to make available to potential employers. Registrants for this service, (a $5 fee is required) may request their credentials record be sent to more than one employer.

19. Credentials Records Sent Out: Total number of credentials packets mailed by the Center.

VII JOB RECRUITER VISITS

20. Recruiters: Number of employment recruiters visiting the Harcum campus.

21. Student Interviews: Number of Harcum students interviewed by employment interviewers.

Periodic reports, (weekly, monthly, and annually) are furnished by the Center to the president and other concerned administrators and staff personnel. The Center also conducts periodic follow-up surveys among Harcum graduates in technical career positions to obtain up-to-date unformation regarding job success among these graduates. In addition, each year the Center also circularizes individuals who have registered with the Center for job placement assistance, thus ensuring that only 'active' registrants are referred for job placement consideration. In all - the Center offers extensive career guidance and job placement assistance to interested Harcum students and alumnae. The consistently high levels of use registered for the various services offered attests to the high regard with which it is viewed, both by students and faculty-staff members.

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